



ENGLISH  
**ACCENT**

*A PLEASANT RIDGE OVERHAUL  
IS A CAREFULLY CURATED  
LABOR OF LOVE*

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**A MANE FAVORITE**  
*Both pages: The traditional  
hearth room replaced a  
dated 1970s sliding glass  
door. It's become the  
couple's favorite place to  
enjoy their morning coffee.*



**DINNER IS SERVED**  
 Above: To obtain an across-the-pond look and to update the kitchen, the men opted to remove an avocado-green oven and other 1970s souvenirs. Today, a large, marble-topped island is a highlight.

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The real estate listing called the 1.5-story 1912 house on one of Pleasant Ridge’s prettiest streets a “classic California bungalow.”

By the time Matt Anstett and Brad Stanwick purchased the 2,800-square-foot home they christened “Thistledown” in 2003, however, there were major structural issues and most of the original architectural details were long gone. “A lot of people told us to tear it down and start over,” Stanwick says. “It was an absolute nightmare, but we fell in love with it.”

The couple was charmed by the home’s livable space and its long history. Built for \$5,000 as a country house to get away from the nearby city, its early residents included some then-notable Detroiters. The fact that “absolutely nothing was original,” according to

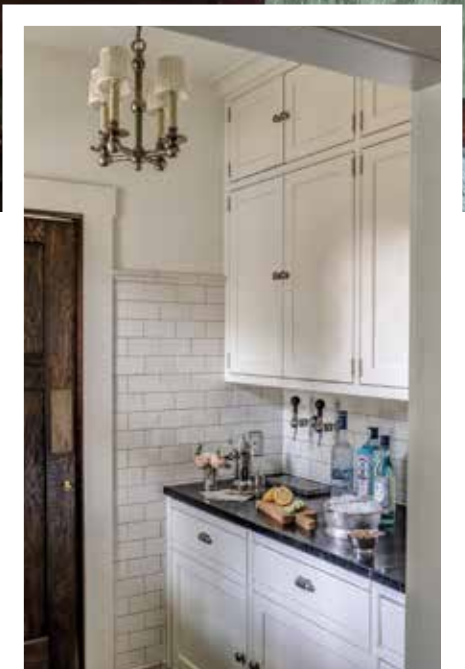


Stanwick, meant the couple had a clean slate. While the house is technically Craftsman in style, Anstett and Stanwick — who own The Parson’s Nose Antiques in Oak Park, which specializes in British antiques — decided to go with a more classic English aesthetic. “I’m an Anglophile,” Stanwick admits. “I just love dark oak.”

The pair had renovated rentals in Ferndale, so they had some experience going into the project. Over the next two decades, they took their time planning and executing renovations as their time, energy, and budget allowed. Early efforts included the design and installation of

**PLEASE BE SEATED**  
 Above: In the dining room, the outline of original paneling under the dated wallpaper inspired the room’s new paneling and beams. Right: The bar features beautiful cabinetry by Perspectives Cabinetry of Troy, while Sonoma Tilemakers tile from Beaver Tile and Stone (Michigan Design Center, Troy) keeps the look fresh and clean.

*“OUR GOAL WAS TO MAKE EVERYTHING LOOK LIKE IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THERE.”* — MATT ANSTETT





English-style gardens and the dining room, where the outline of original paneling under the dated wallpaper inspired the room's new paneling and beams, as well as the home's overall aesthetic direction.

They brought in friend and interior designer John Rattray, of Ferndale-based Craighall Interiors, when they moved to larger elements of the project, including the handsome English-inspired kitchen. The trio first met 15 years ago, when Rattray bought some antiques from Stanwick for his own home and they discovered

a mutual love of English country house style.

"My aesthetic is super informed by Brad," the designer explains of the ensuing friendship and longtime collaboration, which eventually included traveling to Europe on buying trips and to tour country houses, as well as gathering to watch "Downton Abbey." Design inspiration came from near and far, Rattray says, including classic English country houses such as Haddon Hall, in Derbyshire, as well as Meadowbrook Hall, Cranbrook, and the Ford houses closer to home.

The combination of interests and talents was a good fit. "John is amazing at layout and space planning," Stanwick says. "It all blends seamlessly. That's the beauty of having a designer, but John is particularly good at it."

Touring the house, it's hard to believe the millwork, paneling, and other interior architecture isn't original. "Our goal was to make everything look like it had always been there," Anstett explains. In the kitchen, that meant removing an avocado-green "Brady Bunch" double oven and other 1970s souvenirs.

**SWEET DREAMS**

*Both pages: For the primary bedroom, many pieces were procured from The Parson's Nose Antiques, including the armchairs, chest, and artwork.*

"Matt loves cooking and needed a working kitchen," Stanwick shares. "He's the youngest of seven kids, and we host a big Christmas party every year where everyone ends up in the kitchen."

Highlights of the handsome space include a large marble-topped island, lower cabinetry, a heated flagstone floor, and a traditional hearth room, which replaced a dated 1970s sliding glass door. It's become the couple's favorite place to enjoy their morning coffee, overlooking the gardens. "We just gutted these spaces and completely redesigned them," Rattray says.



surround and adding paneling that matches the rest of the rooms, and building a new carriage house with an attached greenhouse. The pair still laughs about the old 2003 real estate listing, which also extolled the virtues of the house's "large covered porch for lazy summer days."

"I can tell you there haven't been any lazy days since we bought the house," Anstett quips.

Ratray says the couple's patience and their devotion to detail is unusual — and refreshing. "It's worth mentioning just how much love and care they put into the house," the designer says. "They were willing to take the time and (make sure they had the) funds to do the right thing, including reconditioning/replicating original windows and doors, selecting quality materials and hardware throughout, and waiting for specialty contractors, rather than just rushing out and cutting corners to see the whole project completed at once."

That was the plan all along, the couple says. "We really took our time getting it right," Anstett says of the finally-almost-complete renovation. It took a lot of vision and a lot of money, but Stanwick says they have no regrets. "I can't think of anything we would do differently. It will never have to be redone because it won't go out of style. We eat mac and cheese every night," he jokes, "but it was worth it." ♦



The kitchen renovation alone took more than a year, Ratray says. They worked within the home's original footprint, but some rooms were moved or reworked to make the layout more efficient. A side deck became a new boot/mud room and flower area. Ratray recommended moving the primary bath to a former den, now a light-filled space where a large cast iron tub looks out over the lush backyard. Matching vanities were cut from a period 17th-century English table and topped with classic marble that's also featured in the custom-slab marble shower.

The nearby primary bedroom, once "all carpeted and pink and light green," Anstett says, now features a large tester bed made in England that looks straight out of a Dickens novel. It took a year to make, Ratray explains. "We were going to do curtains but felt like that might be too much," he adds with a laugh. The old primary bath, meanwhile, became a spacious closet.

Not surprisingly, the inviting spaces throughout the home include carefully curated art and enviable imported antiques. "I'm super interested in Chinese porcelain right now," Stanwick says. "It's all over the place."

Future plans include finishing the living room, including a new limestone fireplace

#### SOAKING IN STYLE

Both pages: The primary bath exudes pure beauty with a stand-alone bathtub, gorgeous chandelier, Kravet window treatments, Waterworks faucets, and a custom-designed mirror. The former primary bath became a spacious closet, explains interior designer John Ratray.

## BUYER'S GUIDE

### INTERIOR DESIGN

Craighall Interiors, Ferndale, [craighallinteriors.com](http://craighallinteriors.com)

### BAR

**Backsplash** – Sonoma Tilemakers, Beaver Tile and Stone, Michigan Design Center, Troy

**Cabinetry** – Perspectives Cabinetry, Troy

**Chandelier** – Visual Comfort  
**Countertop** – PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

**Flooring** – Spurlocks Natural Stone and Brick, Bloomfield Hills

**Wall Paint** – Benjamin Moore, Ancient Ivory

### BATHROOM, PRIMARY

**Bathtub** – Signature Hardware  
**Chandelier** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Curtains** – Kravet, Kravet |

Lee Jofa | Brunswick & Fils, Michigan Design Center, Troy

**Faucets** – Waterworks

**Mirror** – Custom, Designer Furniture Services, Pontiac

**Sconces** – Visual Comfort

**Shower** – PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

**Vanities** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Wall Paint** – Benjamin Moore, Ancient Ivory

### BEDROOM

**Armchairs** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Artwork** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Bed Frame** – Englishman's Fine Furnishings

**Chandelier** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Chest** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Curtains** – Kravet, Kravet |

Lee Jofa | Brunswick & Fils, Michigan Design Center, Troy

**Lamp, Bedside** – Visual Comfort

**Rug** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Table** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Vase** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Wall Paint** – Benjamin Moore, Carrington Beige

### BREAKFAST NOOK

**Artwork** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Chairs** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Chandelier** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Curtains** – Mulberry Home, Kravet, Kravet | Lee Jofa | Brunswick & Fils, Michigan Design Center, Troy

**Fireplace** – Custom

**Flooring** – Spurlocks Natural

Stone and Brick, Birmingham

**Lights, Art** – Visual Comfort

**Table** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Windows** – Weston Millwork Co.

### DINING ROOM

**Artwork** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Chairs, Dining** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Chandelier** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Light, Art** – Visual Comfort

**Pot, Plant** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Table, Dining** – The Parson's Nose Antiques, Oak Park

**Wall Paint** – Benjamin Moore, Carrington Beige

### KITCHEN

**Backsplash** – Sonoma Tilemakers, Beaver Tile and Stone, Michigan Design

Center, Troy

**Cabinetry** – Perspectives Cabinetry, Troy

**Countertop** – PMP Marble & Granite, Troy

**Flooring** – Spurlocks Natural Stone and Brick, Birmingham

**Lighting** – Visual Comfort

**Oven** – Wolf, Trevarrow Inc., Auburn Hills

**Sink** – Rohl

**Wall Paint** – Benjamin Moore, Ancient Ivory

### ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS

**Finish Carpenter** – Jeff Carter, Carter Construction

**Finish Painter** – Dave Lefleur

**General Contractor** – Matt Hewson, Hewson Homes

**Kitchen Cabinetry** – John Morgan, Perspectives Cabinetry, Troy